

Documents from Moscow Archives Describe Building of Air-raid Shelters in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943-44

The imperfect translations which follow convey clearly enough the meaning of three documents recently forwarded by an anonymous source from Russian archives of captured German WWII documents to Samuel Crowell. They give details of logistical problems encountered in the building of **hundreds of air-raid shelters** at Auschwitz-Birkenau in April through November of 1944. This effort being expended on the slave laborers at Auschwitz at this stage of the war, when German field operations had faltered and the supply situation was in increasingly desperate straits, the Russian Army less than 90 days away from overrunning the camp, is *quite at odds with allegations of a death camp* whose sole purpose was the murder of those held there. To the contrary, **Germany needed arms workers to survive and camp commanders were responding to central orders to take greater measures to insure the health of those workers.**

David Thomas, 3/21/98

(See also [David Irving's](#) comments) [Appended]

FIRST MEMO

Auschwitz, den 25. Oktober 1943 178

Bftgb. Nr. 39289 43/Dej/Go

Aktenvermerk


Betr.: Luftschutz-Deckungsgräben.

Am 19.10.43 wurde die ZBL. vom GB-Bau, Kattowitz, durch Herrn Ing. Andre telefonisch davon verständigt, dass bei der Sendung von 7 Waggon L.S.-Gräben 50 % Bruch eingetreten sind.

Von Seiten der ZBL. wurde festgestellt, dass am 17.10. die ersten 3 Waggon und an den folgenden Tagen die übrigen Waggon mit insgesamt 176 Bogenstücken von der ZBL. ordnungsgemäss und ohne Beschädigung im Beisein eines Herrn der Kreisleitung Kattowitz, an welche diese zum Veranag kamen, verladen wurden. Dies wurde auch dem Herrn Ing. Andre vom GB-Bau mitgeteilt.

Bei meinem darauf folgenden Besuch bei der ZBL. am 23.10. erklärte Herr Ing. Andre, dass nach seiner Feststellung der Bruch der Bogenstücke durch unachtsames Verladen in Kattowitz entstanden war.

Es wurde weiters die Herbeischaffung der noch ausstehenden Formen besprochen. Dabei wurde von der ZBL. festgestellt, dass die Herbeischaffung derselben durch den GB-Bau selbst vorzunehmen ist, da hierfür von der Dienststelle wegen Benzinmangel kein Fahrzeug zur Verfügung gestellt werden kann. Ebenso wurde nochmals um die schriftliche Auftragsbestätigung an die ZBL. durch den GB-Bau, Kattowitz, wie seinerseits zwischen Dr. Fiebing vom GB-Bau und SS-Untersturmf. (P) Kirschneck besprochen, gebeten.


SS-Untersturmf. (P)

Verteiler:
Registratur Akt Aktenvermerk *L. S. Griebner*
SS-Untersturmf. (P) Jothann
Bauleitung K.L. und Landw.

Auschwitz, October 25, 1943

[Bftgb. Nr.] 39289 [?] 43/Dej/Go

Report for Record

[Betr.]: Luftschutzdeckungsgraben [Air-Raid Shelter Trench-Covers]

On Oct. 19, 1943 ZBL was informed by GB-Construction, Kattowitz, through Herrn Ing.Andre, via telephone call as I understand, that when the group of 7 carloads of the air-raid shelter trench-covers arrived, 60% showed cracking or fracturing.

On the side ZBL learned it was recorded that on Oct. 11 the first 3 carloads and on the following days the remaining carloads with altogether 176 (curved covers), per ZBL, came in normally and without damage to the (routing official, switching official) at Kattowitz, where they were then stored according to standard procedures. This was also Mr. Ing.Andre's information from some other of the GB-Construction reports.

On his following visit to ZBL on Oct. 23, Mr. Ing.Andre stated otherwise and feels that the breakage of the (curved covers) was due to storage/handling by other than normal procedures at Kattowitz.

There's a problem about the unpaid bills and there's a written contract/job outline that needs to be discussed with GB but there wasn't any gas to send someone to the "possession" (worksite or materials storage location). Plus again somebody is asking about the written work instruction, and ZBL wants the matter to be discussed by Dr. Fiebingel of GB-Construction and SS Ustuf. (F) Kiruchneck.

(Signature)[Dejaco]

SS Untersturmfuehrer (F)

(Distribution list)

SECOND MEMO

Auschwitz, den 5. November 1943

39/499, 42

86

Akt en v e r m e r k

Betr.: Luftschutzdeckungsgräben.

Am 4.11.43 fand in der Dienststelle der ZBL. eine Besprechung zwischen dem Herrn Ing. A n d r e von GB-Bau. Kattowitz, und SS-Ostuf.(P) D e j a c o von der ZBL. betreffend alle offen stehenden Fragen über die Herstellung der L.S.-Deckungsgräben statt. Seitens der ZBL. wurde darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass bis heute immer noch

1. der schriftliche Auftrag fehlt,
2. die Zusage der Bereitstellung der 10 % Kontingente, die von vorgesetzter Dienststelle als Grundlage des Gesamtauftrages der dortigen Stelle mit PS. am 23.8. mitgeteilt wurde,
3. die Zustimmung, dass Bruch zu Lasten des Auftraggebers geht,
4. das Einverständnis, dass die Abnahme der fertiggestellten Betonanteile ab Bauhof der ZBL. erfolgt,
5. die Bestätigung, dass die ersten 500 lfdm Betonanteile im Mischungsverhältnis 1:3 gemischt werden sollen, um sie für die rasche Auslieferung früher transportfähig zu machen,
6. dass die Abrechnung auf Grund der tatsächlich anfallenden Kosten einschl. der von der Preisbildungsstelle zulässigen Zuschläge erfolgt.

Die ZBL. wies darauf hin, dass die Lieferung von L.S.-Deckungsgräben nur erfolgen kann, wenn zur Heranschaffung von Beton-Kies und Zement Dieselöl oder Benzin oder Motorenöl, bzw. Bedarfsschein für die zur Verfügung gestellt werden. Für die ersten 500 lfdm L.S.-Deckungsgräben lt. waren lt. Schreiben der ZBL. vom 8.9.43 Hftgb.Nr.35870/43/Jäg/Go an den GB-Bau insges. 450 l Benzin und 40 l Öl oder 350 kg Diesel und 40 l Öl benötigt. Die ZBL. erhielt vom GB-Bau Kattowitz bisher 150 kg Dieselmotorenkraftstoff zugeleitet. Da nunmehr bereits mehr als 250 lfdm L.S.-Deckungsgräben von der ZBL. fertiggestellt sind, ist diese Kraftstoffzuteilung längst verbraucht. Von der ZBL. wurde Herr

b.w.

Ing. Andre darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass dringend eine Benzin oder Diesel-Zutattung notwendig ist, anderenfalls die Herstellung der L.S. Deckungsgruben eingestellt werden müsste.

Am 4.11.43 sind bei der ZBL. weitere Formen eingegangen und zwar eine Form für halbe Bogen, 2 für Fundamentsteine und 2 für Panzerabwehrplättchen.

Herr Ing. Andre besichtigte die Beton-Werkstätten der ZBL. und konnte sich von dem Fortschritt der Arbeiten an Ort und Stelle selbst überzeugen. Ferner wurde ihm der Transport eines Betonstückes mit selbst hergestellten Trageisen vorgeführt.

SS-Untersturmführer (P)

zur Kenntnis genommen:

SS-Obersturmführer (P)

Verteiler:

Bog. Akt. Aktenvermerk
Bauleitung K.L. und Landw.
Bauwirtschaft

502-1-26-2516

Auschwitz, November 5, 1943

Bftgb. Nr. 39499[1 or ,] 43

Report for Record

[Betr.]: Luftschutzdeckungsgraben [**Air-raid shelter** trench covers]

On November 4 1943, in the department of ZBL, a cleanup meeting was held between Ing.Andre from GB-Construction, Kattowitz, and SS-Ustuf. (F) Dejacó of ZBL, concerning all open questions about the previous manufacture of the L. S. Trench-Covers. Seitens of ZBL. was made aware that as of today, still:

1. the written report is missing,
2. the promise of the provision of 10% contingents, that senior administrators regarded as a basis for the overall-job, and the position of the authorities at FS, communicated on August 23 became [instead],
3. the agreement that breakage due to loading is charged to the customer [?],
4. the agreement that the decrease in number of the pre-formed concrete parts, per Bauhof of ZBL, is as follows,
5. the confirmation that the first 500 LFDM [meters] of concrete parts shall be mixed in a ratio of 1: 3 for swift setting and transport,
6. that a statement of the grounds for the actual costs of claimed adjustments including that of the price-fixing instruction allowable surcharge follow.

ZBL pointed out that the delivery of L.S. Trench-Covers can only happen if the prior purchase of concrete, gravel and cement, plus Diesel oil or gas or motor oil requisite to the apparent needs are received at the required location. For the first 500 lfdm L.S. Trench-Covers, per the ZBL letter of August 9 1943, Brtgb.Nr.3587o/ 43/ [Jaeg]/ [Go] and the GB-Construction [estimates]: 450 liters gasoline, 40 liters oil; or 350 kg diesel and 40 liters of oil are required. ZBL has gotten for GB-Construction Kattowitz up to now 150 kg diesel power substance assigns. Since only a little more than 250 lfdm good prefabricated L.S. Trench-Covers are held by ZBL the fuel allotment is spent for a long time. For ZBL to get the upper hand it must make Ing.Andre aware of how urgent and necessary a gas or diesel allotment is, otherwise the manufacture of the L.S. Trench Covers will have to close down.

On November 4, 1943 at ZBL more molds came in and to be sure a form for half bow, 2 for foundation-stones and 2 for floor plates.

Mister Ing.Andre viewed the concrete workshops of ZBL and was convinced that taking the works to the site would allow successful parts to be made there. Furthermore he received a concrete-piece with manufacturing (capability?).

(Signature) [Dejaco]

[SS-Untersturmfuehrer]

This Information Goes To:

SS-Colonel-Urmfuehrer

Dispatchers:

[Reg]. Act [Aktenvermerk]

[Bauleitung K.L]. and [Landw].

[Bauwirtschaft]

THIRD MEMO

Abchrift von Abchrift I

Kattowitz, den 10. 11. 44 110.
Eingang: 12. 11. 44 Tg. Nr. 14155

Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt
Fernsprecher: 26 51 01
Diktatzeichen:
C 4/1 - 50 - 2/2/b - 670 Mh /Kr.

Berlin, den 9. November 1944
Lichterfelde-West
Unter den Eichen 126 - 135

Betr.: Errichtung von Luftschutzdeckungsgräben im KZ-Auschwitz BW 14 k.
Befehl Dort. Schreiben vom 12. 10. 44 - Az.: SL-Sch/AB/KZ/84/12971/44/
Pl/Bo.

Anl.: 1 Bauantrag 3fach.

An die
Bauinspektion der Waffen-SS und Polizei "Schlesien"

Kattowitz O/S.
Verl. Kochlowskyer Straße.

Baubefehl Nr. 1466.

Auf Grund der eingereichten Unterlagen erteile ich hiermit den Befehl
zur Errichtung von Luftschutzdeckungsgräben im KZ-Auschwitz - BW 14 k.

Hierzu bemerke ich folgendes:

- 1.) Das Bauvorhaben ist unter der Kennzeichnung VII/VIII b Gd 99 (H)
durchführbar.
- 2.) Die eingereichten Unterlagen wurden baupolizeilich und bauwirtschaft-
lich geprüft. Einwendungen gegen den Kostenschlag werden nicht
erhoben. Die Prüfvermerke auf den Unterlagen sind zu beachten.
IS-Deckungsgräben sind nur für je 50 Personen im Hochstufalle zu
bestimmen. Es ist daher eine größere Anzahl, auf das Gelände gut
verteilt, anzuordnen. Die Lüftungsröhre und Schornsteine sind außen-
seitig anzulegen und mit Entwässerung zu versehen.

1 Lageplan wurde zur eigenen Verwendung entnommen.

- 3.) Die benötigten Baumittel wurden in Höhe von

RM 110 000.—

(i. H. Einhundertsechszehntausend 00/100 Reichsmark)
bereitgestellt und sind bei Kapitel 21/7b (Bau) 65 zu verrechnen.

Die auszahlungsanweisende Baudienststelle, die Bauinspektion, muß
über obigen Betrag eine Haushaltsüberwachungsliste führen. Der
Leiter der Bauinspektion haftet für Auszahlungen oder Zahlungsver-
pflichtungen, die über den zugewiesenen Betrag hinausgehen. Vor
Verwendung der restlichen 10 v. H. der zugewiesenen Mittel ist dem
Amt C 4 zu melden, daß die zugewiesenen Baumittel zur Deckung aller
in Frage kommenden Ausgaben ausreichen, andernfalls ist ein begrün-
deter Nachantrag zu stellen.

- 4.) Die erforderlichen Baustoffkontingente werden durch den zuständigen
OT-Einsatzgruppenleiter bereitgestellt.
- 5.) Mit den Arbeiten ist bereits begonnen worden. Über Fortgang und
Stand der Bauarbeiten ist termingemäß zu berichten.
Die Übergabe an den Matratzen ist unter Bezugnahme auf die obige
Baubefehlsummer zu melden.

F.d.H.d.A.
gez. Hoffmann
H.A.

Der Chef des Amtes C V
gez. Noelt
H-Oberratsbauamtsführer

F.d.H.d.A.

Handwritten signature

Z. A. Noelt
So2 - A - 284

Copy of Transcription 1

Kattowitz, November 16/ [Ho].

Receipt: 13.11.44 [Tgb Nr]. 14155

Berlin, November 9, 1944

[Land-Planning West]

Under the Standards of 126-135

SS Economic Administration Main Office

Telephone: 76 51 01

[Copy Certification]: C V/ 1-So-2/ 2/ b-670 [Mueh]/ [Ke].

[Re]: **Construction of Air-Raid Shelter/Trench-Covers in KGL-Auschwitz** BW 14 k.

[EDITOR: The reader will note **KGL is an abbreviation for Concentration Camp.**]

[Vouched by]: [Messages from there:] 12.10.44- [Az].: [BI-Sch]/ [AU]/ [KGL]/ 84/ 12971/ 44/ pi/ [Ho].

[Enclosed]: 1 Construction Proposal, 3 Copies

To: Construction Supervision, Waffen-SS and Police "[Schlesien]"

Kattowitz O/ S.

Verl. Kochlowitzer street.

Construction Order Nr. 1486

Based on the submitted records **I hereby give the order for the construction of air-raid-shelter/covered-trenches in KGL-Auschwitz-BW 14 K.**

Concerning this I note the following:

1.) The construction plan is viable per the Drawings Nr. [VII]/ [VIII] b [Gd] of 99 (M)

2.) The [fair wages/pricing] records were examined by [Construction Police] and [Construction Economic Planning]. Objections against the cost estimate were not raised. The examination notes on the records signify compliance. LS Trench-Cover [shelters] are for 50 persons only in the maximum case for test/appraisal. It is therefore a considerable number to safely arrange on that terrain. The ventilation pipes and chimneys are put on the outside and provided with drainage.

1 ground plan was made for [each] individual use [named].

3.) The required construction means comes to the amount of [RM] 110 of 000.

[i.W]. One hundred and ten thousand and 00/ 100 Federal-marks)

held at the ready at Section 21/ 7b Building 65, to be paid out.

The disbursement instructions inform the construction administration department that construction supervision must maintain an in-house payment-total watch list. The head of the construction supervision is liable for outpayments or liabilities over the allotted amount.

Before use of the residual 10 v. H. of the allocated means [there] is a duty to notify U V that the assigned construction monies to the cover all upcoming distributions is enough, or that a well-founded proposition for more is put forth [if this is not the case].

4.) The required construction material contingents shall be readily arranged through the appropriate OT-employment-group-leader.

5.) **The work has already begun.** Before departure, verify that operations are up to date in accordance with instructions.

The transfer for the recipient is on record at the foregoing construction order number for notification.

The Head of the Office C V

[gez]. [Noell]

SS-colonel-Urbannfuehrer

[F.d.R.d.A].

[gez.Hoffman]

[Z.A].

[F.d.R.d.A].

([signature])

ADDENDUM

New Documents on Air Raid Shelters at Auschwitz Camp

Brief Introduction:

AMERICAN WRITER "[Samuel Crowell](#)" [*pseudonym*], author of *Technique and Operation of German Anti-Gas Shelters in WW2*, published in German translation in **Gerhard Rudolf's** journal *Vierteljahreshefte für freie Geschichtsforschung* [VffG/VHO@aol.com] submitted three documents recently obtained from the archives of the former Soviet special state archives (the "trophy") archives. For Crowell's other writings, see <http://www.codoh.com/incon/inconshr123.html>. These bear on his thesis that the gas-tight doors found at the Auschwitz site (a facsimile of which is displayed at the Holocaust Memorial Museum at Washington DC) were nothing more sinister than the remains of air-raid shelters; all such shelters were fitted with gas-tight doors, in anticipation of Allied poison-gas attacks.

February 18, 1998. "Crowell" writes in part:

Someone read my article, and sent **three documents from the Moscow Archives**. The contributor chooses to remain anonymous.

Two documents consist of memoranda signed by SS-Unterstürmführer **Dejaco**, dated October 25 and November 5, 1943, concerning the construction of Luftschutzdeckungsgräben at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The third consists of either the final order or a further order for LS-Deckungsgräben construction from November, 1944, signed by Nöll.

This is a significant advance, in my view, to the elaboration of the Bomb Shelter Thesis.

[The documents can be downloaded and legibly printed.]

See Crowell's [letter](#) to this Website, March 21, 1998

See too the [letter](#) to ACTION REPORT #14 with the photograph of the gas-chamber door in US Holocaust Memorial Museum archives.

<http://www.fpp.co.uk/Auschwitz/documents/LSKeller/MoscowDocs.html>

Edited comments of Author "Samuel Crowell" (February 19, 1998):

I will make a few comments below about their provenance, and then a few more comments about the "Bomb Shelter Thesis". The source of all three documents is the Central State Archives in Moscow and have the following registration numbers:

- Letter of October 25, 1943 502-1-26-178
- Letter of November 5, 1943 502-1-26-186 & 186R (two sheets)
- Letter of November 16, 1944 502-1-281

It can be argued that gas chamber claims arose out of mass suspicion over disease and disinfection procedures, gas warfare, and cremation as a means of disposal of the dead. The rumor was firmly planted by the time the camp was liberated, the Polish and Soviet prosecutors merely gathered up every documentary reference to "gas" in order to support their case. A critical element is the fear of poison gas, especially in air raids, which I document thoroughly, and the widespread equipment of Germany and its concentration camp system with air raid and anti-gas shelters. Many documents referencing "gas" are actually referencing civil defense paraphernalia. I believe I was the first to argue, beginning March, 1997, that (1) air raid shelters and gas shelters are synonymous, (2) that essentially all of Jean-Claude Pressac's documents, and thus the entire "gas chamber" documentary record for Auschwitz Birkenau, point to *air raid shelters*, (3) that each of the crematoria at Birkenau was equipped with a gas-tight bomb shelter, and (4) that the prevalence of gas-fear in the 1930's was of crucial importance in the development of the mass gassing claim overall.

#1. Footnote #4 of my article "Technique" suggests that there were dozens and perhaps hundreds of air raid shelters at Auschwitz which have been hitherto ignored. These three documents prove that hundreds of such shelters were at least planned.

#2. My assessment is that the 1943 letters pertain to the cracking of some concrete shells (*Bogenstücke*) used for covering trench shelters, as defined in my article "Defending" Part 2.

#3 The three documents give us some idea of scope and cost. We know we are talking about trench shelters, because these usually hold about 50 people (*letter of November 11, 1944*) and are built for the prisoners ("Defending", Part 2). We must be discussing at least 176 such shelters, so as I interpret the "*Bogenstücke*", and we are dealing in magnitudes of shells of in excess of 500 running meters, (lfdm), I gather greater than 1600 feet. In addition, expenditures have been set at 110,000 RM.

#4 Prima facie, this is an extensive program to build shelters, including shelters for concentration camp inmates. The earliest reference to planning is a phone call from August 23, 1943. (letter of November 5, 1943). This is six or seven months after Himmler's February 8, 1943, order on protecting concentration camps from mass escapes in event of a bombing raid ("Defending", Part 2), and only just after the finished equipment of the newly built Birkenau crematoria with numerous gas-tight fixtures.

#5 The German civil defense philosophy was that Luftschutzkreisen were designed to be fully integrated; in other words, you did not build just a few shelters for a few people, you endeavored to build shelters for everyone ("Defending", Part 1). The presence of these trench shelters, in other words, strongly implies that fixed structures were also equipped with air raid shelters.

#6 To put it another way, the presence of these trench shelters strongly argues that the crematoria were also equipped with their own air raid/gas shelters, because that accords with German LS policy.

#7 Since #6 is the argument of "Technique", we can safely argue that each crematorium had such air raid/gas shelters. But in that case, where were the "gas chambers"?

#8 It is also noteworthy that the SS would go to so much time, expense, and trouble, to build gas-tight air raid shelters for people who were supposed to be condemned to extermination.

#9 It is furthermore noteworthy that neither Pressac, nor any establishment Holocaust historian, has ever bothered to even notice the importance of these civil defense measures. After all, if you have hundreds of air raid shelters, that's a lot of gas-tight doors.



*ABOVE: Image No. 14614 offered by the **US Holocaust Memorial Museum** in Washington*

Paul W writes from Hamburg, Germany:

"YESTERDAY I went onto the US Holocaust Museum site and looked at their photos. The first photo that came up under the search word GAS CHAMBER was a door to a gas chamber in Auschwitz where the sign on the door says **Harmful Gas, Entering Endangers your Life.** [*SEE ABOVE*]

That sort of ruins their 'Everybody believed they were going to be showered' story does it not?"

Note that the door handle can be opened from *the inside*. And note the disclaimer which the Museum displays on their Web front page, perhaps as a result of the hoots from Revisionists



"The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (the USHMM) freely provides the information contained on this website to our website visitors.

"Although the USHMM makes every reasonable effort (sic) to provide accurate information (sic), the **USHMM cannot guarantee the accuracy, reliability, currency, or completeness of the information contained on this website** or on any other website with which it is linked.

"The USHMM therefore disclaims responsibility for any errors in the information provided, and the USHMM urges all visitors to this website to take their own steps to obtain independent verification of the information provided.

"In addition, the **USHMM disclaims all warranties, including the implied warranty of fitness** for a particular purpose, in regard to the information provided on this website."

The Original Letter, which elicited the generous efforts of the Russian archivist.

Samuel Crowell writes from the United States, Saturday, March 21, 1998

Dear Mr. Irving:

YOUR SITE already has some very important materials, among them the notes of your transcriptions of **ULTRA decrypts**, which I am bound to reference. Once again, the *absence* of any references to gassing simply reinforces the idea that *if* there was a gassing campaign it would have required a mind-boggling conspiracy to carry out -- and it is precisely that which is the weak point in the conventional view.

Your **response** to the letter concerning the Himmler diaries was quite shocking. I can only hope that the diaries were not destroyed. It should be considered fairly obvious that they contained nothing to support the traditional view, either.

I had occasion to come across Ann Tusa's review of your **Nuremberg book**. I must say the immediate substitution of hysterical emotion in place of reasoned appraisal is not something that readily comes to mind when I think of English writers.

I will take the liberty of placing you on my short list of individuals to be notified if new materials come my way. In the meantime, rest assured that your site is visited frequently.

Best Regards, **Samuel Crowell**

***Samuel Crowell** is the pseudonym of an American researcher who is specialising on the design and construction of wartime gas-tight air-raid shelters, as installed in German public buildings and prison installations. He has collected much documentation, and written several essays on the subject.*